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## NEW YORK AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF TEXAS

JAMES E. WINSTON

The *New York Courier and Enquirer* of June 6, 1836, copied from a Mexican journal the following comment upon the massacre of Fannin and his men: "Humanity will recoil at this event, as the prisoners had surrendered; *but it is absolutely necessary to exterminate this race of serpents*, whom in an evil hour we have permitted to come into the country." In these words are summed up the beginning of all of Mexico's difficulties with her rebellious subjects. When Stephen F. Austin led his colony of three hundred Anglo-American settlers into Mexican territory, the first step was taken in the march of events which were destined, sooner or later, to result in the dismemberment of Mexico.

It has been the fashion for writers to see in the movements connected with the independence of Texas and its annexation to the United States only a scheme pushed forward by the slave power.<sup>1</sup> It is safe to affirm that had there not been a single slave within the limits of the United States, the independence of Texas and its subsequent incorporation within the American Union would have come about just the same. The question of the annexation of Texas became involved with another question,—the further extension of slavery—and the fierce passions engendered by the discussion of the latter have colored the treatment of the Texan question by those writers whose abhorrence of everything connected with slavery has led them to attribute all our national sins for a period of several decades to the iniquitous "slave power." The diplomacy of the American government during the years preceding the annexation of Texas has been characterized as dark and tortuous.<sup>2</sup> The Mexican War, according to these writers, was an unjustifiable attack by a strong power upon a weak one; and when the weaker nation had succumbed, the United States outrageously filched from its beaten foe an enormous portion of the latter's territory. In a word, the entire period in our

<sup>1</sup>For such a partisan treatment, see Schurz, *Henry Clay*, I, 86, *et seq.* This view has been effectually disposed of by Smith, *The Annexation of Texas*, 28-29.

<sup>2</sup>See Rhodes, *History of the United States*, I, 75, 86.

history beginning with the Texan revolt in 1835 and ending with the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, they say, is one of which Americans should feel thoroughly ashamed. While few, perhaps, would contend that the government of the United States should be acquitted entirely of blame in its dealings with Mexico, it is doubtful if, in spite of the abuse which has been heaped upon Polk, there is one who would be willing to surrender a foot of the territory acquired by a President whose administration, a recent writer asserts, stands second to few, so far as achievements of vital importance are concerned.<sup>3</sup> While designing men and sordid motives were not entirely wanting in connection with the movement for the independence of Texas, yet the *empresarios* who settled Mexican soil were, in the main, moved by "the never extinct yearning in the United States for territorial expansion." This same yearning was to carry the western boundary of the United States beyond the Stony Mountains, stopping only at the shores of the Pacific.

It was in the fall of 1835 that the citizens of New York State read in their papers of the invasion of Texas by Mexican troops. The news excited great interest in the empire state, as is evidenced by the large amount of space given to the Texas question by the leading journals in New York City.<sup>4</sup> Of these the *Courier and Enquirer* and the *Evening Post* were perhaps the ablest. The former was edited by James Watson Webb and was a staunch defender of Whig principles. Hence the tone of this newspaper was at times decidedly hostile to Texas. Our government, it asserted, could ill afford to promote the views of land speculators or those engaged in an illicit trade.<sup>5</sup> What illicit trade this was is not stated, but evidently reference is intended to the slave trade.

<sup>3</sup>Dodd in *American Historical Review*, XVIII, 524. See Schouler, *History of the United States*, V, 124: "The crown jewels which Polk's strong policy bequeathed to the country were of priceless worth,—Oregon, and all that splendid spoliation of Mexico, whose chief of hidden treasures was California."

<sup>4</sup>See the letters of Henry Meigs of New York to Austin, cited by Miss Ethel Z. Rather, "Recognition of the Republic of Texas by the United States," *THE QUARTERLY*, XIII, 171.

<sup>5</sup>*New York Courier and Enquirer*, Oct. 28, 1835. This newspaper had its regular New Orleans correspondent who kept it informed as to the situation in Texas. An interesting letter from this source appeared in the issue of Nov. 21, 1836. Among other things, the writer expressed the opinion that the Texan war was a mere pretext on the part of Mexico to establish upon a solid basis a despotic military government.

The fact that a committee of New Orleans citizens were receiving donations for Texas called forth a lengthy editorial in the *Courier and Enquirer* against such proceedings. These fellows were nothing but "a set of frontiersmen styling themselves Texans or Texonians." The truth of the matter was that a party of land speculators, having failed to induce our government to purchase Texas, were determined to conquer that country on their own account. "Let Texas be conquered from Mexico—what then?—the history of Texas will be that of Mexico; and so on till Panama and the Pacific shall be the boundaries of our restless craving and insatiable avarice."<sup>6</sup> We know now that "the cohort of schemers and speculators"<sup>7</sup> formed but a small company among the friends of Texas. The statement characterizing the Texas emigrants as land speculators was not permitted to pass unchallenged. In the same journal for November 3, 1835, appeared a communication declaring the Texans were not rebels, nor were they incited to rebel by land speculators. Let individuals of the west, continued this writer, quietly repair to Texas and fight in behalf of liberty and chartered rights. The cause of the trouble, according to another contributor, was that Texas had excited the jealousy of the priesthood. The provisional government should declare the independence of Texas, seize the public lands, and offer some to volunteers. At any rate the region offered a fine field for adventurous spirits.<sup>8</sup>

The *Evening Post* vigorously repelled the insinuations which found widespread currency as to the character of the Texan settlers. "The society to be found there is composed of men of intelligence and republican habits, and if men of a different description are to be found there, they bear as small a proportion to the whole number as bad men do in any other part of the globe."<sup>9</sup>

As may be imagined the *Albany Argus* was deeply incensed at the attitude of what it termed the 'opposition' press to the affairs

<sup>6</sup>*Courier and Enquirer*, Oct. 31, 1835.

<sup>7</sup>Smith, *The Annexation of Texas*, 31. Similarly, E. C. Barker, in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* for June, 1914 (1, 9), has this to say: "Land speculators may have been at the bottom of some of the enthusiasm displayed for the Texan cause, but their influence can hardly be established."

<sup>8</sup>*Courier and Enquirer*, Aug. 5, Nov. 3, 1835.

<sup>9</sup>*Evening Post*, Nov. 6, 1835.

of Texas. One of the worst offenders in this respect was the *National Intelligencer*. This journal and the *New York American* were doing their utmost to frown down enthusiasm for the Texan cause, thereby seeking to repress the emigration of volunteers to the region beyond the Sabine. It was very evident to the editor of the *Argus* that the *American* was annoyed at the prospects of the Texans sustaining themselves by volunteer aid against their Mexican oppressors—an instance of its foreign impartialities; furthermore by citing the pains and penalties of the neutrality laws, this same paper was seeking to check the generous impulse of its readers in regard to Texas. "Why does it scruple to aid and abet the corps of abolitionists who are plotting against the peace, safety and institutions of communities bound to us by strong ties and sacred obligations of our national compact?"<sup>10</sup> The fact that the *National Intelligencer* took obvious ground against its own country on the question of the treaty of limits with Mexico and accused "Gen. Jackson and the administration of a desire to provoke a war for the benefit of Mexico and for the relief of surplus revenue" might be explained by reason of its editor being an Englishman. On the other hand, the *Argus* continued, when the *Albany Daily Advertiser* charged the President with "being opposed to the natural and just claims of Texas," this was merely an appeal to the sympathies of the country against that monster of modern times, towit, Santa Anna; the appeal of the *Intelligencer* was to the Whig friends of the Mexican general. Not content with their unpatriotic and unsympathetic attitude, these journals of the 'opposition' were ever striving to destroy the character, influence and usefulness of General Houston by spreading abroad a suspicion that he had quarreled with the Texan civil authorities, and by representing that the victor of San Jacinto was suffering under the imputations of cowardice. The news that a speech of Adams had appeared in the Spanish official gazette at Madrid, July 12, drew from the *Argus* this comment: "Ex-Pres. Adams' Anti-Texian and Anti-American philippic in the House on the last day of May has met with as favorable a reception among Tory conservatives and monarchists of Europe as with all the Whig champions of Mexican tyranny on this side the water."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>*Albany Argus*, July 4, Aug. 26, 1836.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, June 22, Oct. 22, 1836.

It is thus seen that the struggle between the Texans and the Mexican government was presented in an entirely different light depending upon whether the news was printed in a Democratic paper or was set forth in the columns of an 'opposition' journal. On the other hand, as will be seen below, the Texas question in all its phases was discussed in as intelligent and sane a fashion by the press of New York City as by that of any other city within the Union. While partisan editors strove to convince their readers of the justness or the wickedness of the Texans in taking up arms in defence of their constitutional rights, citizens were giving evidence of their interest in the welfare of the struggling colonists by holding meetings and raising money in furtherance of the cause of Texan independence. On Saturday evening, November 7, such a meeting was held at the Shakespeare Hotel. At this meeting, which was presided over by Colonel Knapp, it was resolved that a committee be appointed to receive donations. The meeting then adjourned to meet at Tammany Hall on November 12.<sup>12</sup> On this occasion, according to one account, over two thousand were present. An eloquent address was delivered by Samuel L. Knapp. Several hundred dollars were subscribed, and a series of six resolutions was adopted, expressing sympathy with the Texans and pledging them help. An address was issued by the New York executive committee to the citizens of the community; a call for aid was made for the colonists, who had reduced Texas to civilization; "they are neither speculators nor intruders, but most of them are the hardy yeomanry of America, who were the pioneers of Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Missouri; they are no insurgents, but as freemen are fighting to protect themselves, their wives, and children, from the rude assaults of mili-

<sup>12</sup>*Evening Post*, Nov. 10, 12, 1835. Burr Wakeman was treasurer of the committee of thirty-two to solicit funds. The composition of the committee was as follows: John Haggerty, Willis Hall, Daniel Jackson, John L. Graham, George D. Strong, Samuel L. Knapp, P. M. Wetmore, Silas M. Stilwell, Dudley Seldon, Henry Wyckoff, Augustus McDonald, Burr Wakeman, A. Palmer, A. Bates, Richard B. Mason, B. W. Osborn, R. C. Hance, Alexander Ming, Jr., James J. Mapes, Charles G. Ferris, William Gordon, Walter Bonne, James L. Curtis, M. L. Smith, Reuben Withen, Anthony Dey, William van Wyck, Robert Smith, Henry Ogden, A. H. van Wyck, Samuel Lawyer, John Harris. Contribution in the way of provisions, clothing, and other stores were to be left at McDonald and Arnold's, 62 Front St. *Courier and Enquirer*, Nov. 16, 1835. Another New York firm interested in organizing support in behalf of the Texans was that of Caldwell, Bogart and Company. *Ibid.*, Oct. 31, 1835.

tary violence." Having in this direct fashion stated the actual facts of the Texas situation, and appointed a committee in behalf of Texas, the meeting adjourned.<sup>13</sup> The *Evening Post* of November 14 stated that a Mr. Mossie would give the proceeds of a performance on Saturday evening for the benefit of the suffering fellow countrymen of Texas. An ode written for the occasion would be recited by a gentleman of the city. A few weeks later a benefit was given by professional talent at the American theatre for the relief of the Texans.<sup>14</sup> Later another benefit was held at the same place for a similar purpose. On this occasion was performed the "Tragedy of Venice Preserved." The entertainment also included comic songs, fancy dancing, and concluded with an opera dignified by the name of "Bone Squash."<sup>15</sup>

These months also witnessed the departure of the first volunteers from New York to Texas. On November 19, according to one account, a vessel departed for Texas with some two hundred volunteers.<sup>16</sup> In the *Courier and Enquirer* for November 30 appeared the following notice: "For Texas—On Wednesday next, the 2d of December, there will be a good vessel despatched for the above port, which will take a select number of gentlemen as passengers; say as many as can go comfortable. The passage will be \$15. McDonald & Arnold, 62 Front St." The enthusiasm of New Yorkers for Texas was abated considerably by a disastrous fire which broke out in the first ward of the city on the night of December 16. The whole area between Wall and South Street in the neighborhood of Hanover Square was wiped out. Upwards of seven hundred buildings were destroyed, entailing a loss of over fifteen million dollars.<sup>17</sup>

One of the interesting episodes of the time is the account of the brig, *Matawamkeag*, hailing from Bangor. This vessel was

<sup>13</sup>*Evening Post*, Nov. 14, 1835; *Albany Argus*, Nov. 18, 1835. The chairman of this meeting was Daniel Jackson and the secretary, William van Wyck. The address was signed by these two and Burr Wakeman. The committee appointed was to meet two days later at the Shakespeare Hotel.

<sup>14</sup>*Evening Post*, Dec. 17, 1835. The price of boxes was \$1.00, the pit fifty cents.

<sup>15</sup>*Evening Post*, Nov. 19, 1835. The previous year three schooners full of emigrants had left New York within four weeks, and two more were said to be preparing. See Smith, *The Annexation of Texas*, 30.

<sup>16</sup>*Evening Post*, Jan. 7, 1836.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, Dec. 20, 1835.

chartered by the Texas executive committee mentioned above and sailed from North river for Texas on Saturday evening, November 21. There were said to be some two hundred emigrants on board, including between forty and fifty natives of Poland. Among those shipping were Colonel E. H. Stanley, who commanded one hundred and eighty men and officers. When nine days out the brig made the eastern end of Eleuthera, one of the islands of the Bahamas group. Here seventeen men under Colonel Stanley went ashore with arms, contrary to the wishes of the captain, and plundered a plantation. The matter being reported at Nassau, search was instituted by the English brig, *Serpent*, carrying fourteen guns, with the result that the *Matawamkeag* was captured on Sunday, December 6, off a point designated as Hole in the Wall. The Poles and French being placed in a boat by themselves, the rest of the Texas volunteers were placed under the surveillance of the second West Indian regiment, made up of negroes. On January 15, the grand jury for the Admiralty Session returned "no bill" on the charge of piracy. The volunteers were accordingly discharged, with the exception of Colonel Stanley and ten others, who were detained to await trial on a charge of felony. The *Texas Republican* of March 16 reported the arrival of Colonel Stanley and a company of volunteers, seventy-four in number, the week previous at the Brazos, whence they set sail for Copano.<sup>18</sup>

The ill-fated Tampico expedition included among its victims several New Yorkers. One of these was Jacob Morrison, aged twenty-one, whose parents are said to have resided in Kentucky; another was Edward Mount, twenty-three years of age, whose mother was living in New York; lastly occurs the name of W. C. Barkley, aged twenty. This letter from him has been preserved.<sup>19</sup>

Tampico Prison,  
Dec. 13th, 1835.

Dear Father and Mother:—

When you receive this I shall be in my grave. I shipped from New Orleans for Brazos, Texas, without the knowledge of our

<sup>18</sup>According to one account the *Matawamkeag* carried eight guns and 250 men. *Albany Argus*, Nov. 23, 1835. See *Evening Post*, Dec. 20, 1835; *Courier and Enquirer*, Dec. 30, 1835, Jan. 1, 1836; *Poulson's Advertiser*, Feb. 6, 1836; *United States Gazette*, April 22, 1836; *Philadelphia National Gazette*, April 22, 1836.

<sup>19</sup>*Evening Post*, Jan. 11, 1836.



friends, and was forced to put into Tampico, and there made prisoner, and am to be shot, together with 29 others, to-morrow morning at 8 o'clock.

Give my love to my brothers and sisters. I hope you will not mourn my death, as I shall die perfectly happy.

Your affectionate son,

Wm. C. Barkley.

The volunteers who fell as victims to Mexican hate were like dragon's teeth sowed by the ancient hero. For every one that perished, a hundred of their fellow-countrymen stood ready to avenge their deaths. One account says: "In a short time there will be a force sufficient in Texas to carry the war, if necessary, even to the walls of Mexico."<sup>20</sup> This was a bit optimistic in view of the lamentable quarrels which in a short time were to distract the government and to paralyze effective effort against the enemy.

The news of the fate of the different commands of Texan troops in the spring of 1836 created the deepest indignation in every part of the United States. The massacre of Fannin and his men was a most impolitic as well as a brutal affair. Whig as well as Democratic editors united in denouncing the perpetrators of the deed. In speaking of the fate of Colonel Johnson's command, the *Courier and Enquirer* said: "Their fate cannot but excite our sympathies and create a feeling of holy indignation against the unprincipled tyrant who authorized the butchery."<sup>21</sup> The *Post* felt the result of the Texan barbarities would be to awaken a general sympathy for Texas and a strong interest in its fortunes, thereby impelling many adventurous and ardent spirits to throng to the aid of their brethren.<sup>22</sup> According to the *Albany Argus* "a few of the Whig presses have come to the aid of Santa Anna and attempt to palliate the enormities of the Mexican tyrant. Aside from exaggeration by land agents, he has been guilty of cold-blooded massacre and violations of the feelings of humanity and rules of honorable warfare without a parallel in

<sup>20</sup>*Albany Argus*, Jan. 25, 1836. A writer in the *Courier and Enquirer* was even more optimistic: "War will now be carried into the enemy's country, where gold and silver are plenty [plentiful], there will be fine pickings in the interior. The war will never end until Mexico is completely our own and conquered."

<sup>21</sup>Quoted by the *Albany Argus*, April 16, 1836.

<sup>22</sup>*Evening Post*, April 26, 1836.

the history of modern crime."<sup>23</sup> One result of the publication of the Mexican atrocities was renewed interest and activity in the affairs of Texas.<sup>24</sup> On April 21 Alderman Stilwell introduced the following resolution into the common council of New York: "That the Commonwealth of Texas is a free, sovereign, and independent state, and in her intercourse with nations should be considered as such."<sup>25</sup> This resolution may have been due to the activity of the Texas Commissioners who were in New York this month.<sup>26</sup> On May 23 memorials were presented in the Senate from citizens of New York asking Congress to recognize the independence of Texas.<sup>27</sup> On April 26 a meeting was held at Masonic Hall, which was filled with Texan sympathizers. The meeting was presided over by Samuel Swartwout, 'an ardent friend of Texas.' Addresses were delivered by Austin, Archer, and Wharton; also by William Hall, Colonel J. C. Webb, and William Campbell of Charlestown, Mass. Resolutions were adopted favoring the recognition of the independence of Texas, and declaring that the great law of humanity justified aid to the Texans; committees were appointed to make collections and to carry the object of the meeting into effect.<sup>28</sup> The *Journal of Commerce* made the following appeal in behalf of the meeting: "Are we to look calmly on and see such deeds of blood and carnage acted on our borders, without expressing our indignation and horror at their

<sup>23</sup>*Albany Argus*, Jan. 1, 1836. See *Ibid.*, May 4, June 8, 1836.

<sup>24</sup>*United States Gazette*, April 21, 1836.

<sup>25</sup>Col. J. M. Wolfe was in New York the first week in April; Austin 'was in the city the middle of the month, when he made a desperate attempt to secure the active support of the United States as a nation.' Rather, *THE QUARTERLY*, XIII, 185.

<sup>26</sup>*Cong. Globe*, 1st Sess., 24 Cong., III, 396. It was said the memorial contained about 1000 signatures. *Albany Argus*, May 25, 1836.

<sup>27</sup>A recent authority finds that the "stupid atrocities of the Mexicans" were "the essential causes of the assistance given Texas by the Americans." Smith, *The Annexation of Texas*, 31, 32.

<sup>28</sup>*Evening Post*, April 27, 1836. The vice-presidents of the meeting were Daniel Jackson, James Monroe, Alexander Hamilton, Chas. A. Clinton, Silas M. Stillwell, and James Watson Webb, editor of the *Courier and Enquirer*. The secretaries were Willis Hall, James L. Curtis, Asa P. Ufford, and William van Wyck. The call for the meeting was signed by Samuel Swartwout, Silas M. Stilwell, Burr Wakeman, James Monroe, Edward Curtis, John N. Greenfield, Geo. A. Ward, Daniel Jackson, James L. Curtis, Peter R. Wyckoff, Thos. E. Davis, Thomas Jenkins, Wm. C. Wales, Jno. H. Sibell, Alexander Hamilton, Henry Ogden, J. Prescott Hall, John Windt, George Curtis, Dudley Selden, N. M. Nash, Willis Hall, John Cleveland, Robert N. Foster, John Ward.

perpetration? God forbid. Then let us rally at Masonic Hall, and show that we can feel and express sympathy for our brethren of Texas, whose case at this moment is deplorable in the extreme."<sup>29</sup> On Thursday, April 28, books for a Texan loan were opened and, through the instrumentality of the commissioners, a loan of \$100,000 was negotiated in a single day, the subscribers being permitted to take Texas lands at twenty-five cents an acre.<sup>30</sup> Both Austin and Wharton were in New York in May, and the latter was there again in June.<sup>31</sup> The only other meeting of Texas sympathizers in New York of which evidence has been found was one on July 18 at the American Hotel. On this occasion the cause of Texas was urged in an eloquent and persuasive manner by the friends of the new republic. Samuel Swartwout presided, and toasts were responded to by Colonel Preston of South Carolina, General Hamilton of the same state, General Ripley of Louisiana, and Mr. Peyton, of Tennessee.<sup>32</sup>

The news of the fall of Alamo was published in New York some five weeks after that disaster. At least two natives of New York perished on this occasion: a man by the name of Forsyth, who bore the rank of captain; and a blacksmith by the name of Dewell.<sup>33</sup> Among those of Captain Duval's command who escaped at the time of Fannin's massacre is mentioned John Holliday, of New York.<sup>34</sup> In a list of prisoners, taken at Nueces and confined at Matamoras, occur the names of S. S. Curtis, age twenty-three, of Madison County, New York, and that of James Wilson, of the same age, who resided at the corner of Spring and Sullivan Streets in New York City.<sup>35</sup> The following residents of New York were enrolled in the service of Texas: H. S. Smith, second sergeant, John Beldin, Stuart Hill, John Williams, George Mills, Stephen Winship, William Howell, Rufus R. Jetty, Elisha Spencer, Charles H. Rue, Caleb A. Carpenter, Lewis Marble, L. J.

<sup>29</sup>Quoted by the *Albany Argus*, April 28, 1836.

<sup>30</sup>See Rather, *THE QUARTERLY*, XIII, 186-187. Only ten per cent of these subscriptions seems, however, to have been paid. See Barker, "The Finances of the Texas Revolution," in *Political Science Quarterly*, XIX, 634.

<sup>31</sup>*Courier and Enquirer*, June 9, 1836.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, July 20, 1836; *Albany Argus*, July 20, 1836.

<sup>33</sup>*Muster Rolls*, General Land Office (MS.), 238; Newell, *History of the Revolution in Texas*, Appendix, 211.

<sup>34</sup>*Kentucky Gazette*, July 7, 1836.

<sup>35</sup>*United States Gazette*, May 20, 1836.

Parker. Abner Holmes and William C. Hart were enrolled at New Orleans in Captain Lawrence's company for a period during the war; A. V. Faro was enrolled for a similar period in the same company at Louisville, while Daniel McDonald was enrolled at the same place in Captain Allen's company. Samuel M—— was enrolled at Cincinnati in the same company.<sup>36</sup> In the battle of San Jacinto was John M. Wade, of the artillery corps and S. L. Wheeler of Company B, Texas Volunteers. John E. Lewis and Theodore S. Lee are also said to have been in the army on this occasion. In addition the following New Yorkers rendered the Texan republic military service: John Adriance, of Captain Eberly's company; John Bryan, S. M. Harris, Gwyn Morrison, R. W. McManus, and T. W. Marshall, who was pilot on the steamer *Laura*.<sup>37</sup> Other natives of New York who became prominent in one capacity or another in Texas were Captain Oliver Jones, one of Austin's colonists, who figured actively in the affairs of the revolutionary period, Gail Borden, member of the Consultation, John P. Borden, first Commissioner of the General Land Office, Thomas H. Borden and Francis A. Moore, editors, Louis P. Cook, second secretary of the navy, Erastus Smith, Thomas J. Pilgrim, and others.<sup>38</sup>

The correspondent of the *Courier and Enquirer*, writing at the close of the year, questions if any more volunteers are needed. Texas needed farmers, mechanics, laborers, and "a cargo or two of industrious girls," who were said to be very scarce.<sup>39</sup> From the same source came information as to the value of Texas lands: "Texas lands sell very high here; 40 cents the minimum, one dollar the maximum, for good titles. M. sold yesterday five leagues on the Navasota at 45 cents, half cash, half six months. Small lots, in fee simple, already located, sell from one to five dollars per acre."<sup>40</sup> In the newly proposed town of Houston the appli-

<sup>36</sup>*Muster Rolls* (MS.), 238-239.

<sup>37</sup>See Baker, *Texas Scrap Book*, 585. The list of names given is necessarily an incomplete one. There were no doubt others from New York who saw service in Texas. The *New Orleans Bulletin* of May 23 mentions two New York schooners with about five hundred volunteers, but no confirmation of the statement has been observed.

<sup>38</sup>THE QUARTERLY, V, 33; X, 172.

<sup>39</sup>*Courier and Enquirer*, Dec. 1, 1836. The issues of Nov. 16, 1836, and of Jan. 21, 1837, publish what might be expected by volunteers in the way of pay and land.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, Dec. 17, 1836. Texas government land scrip was being offered

cations for lots were so numerous that one agent had refused \$80.00 for each lot. Of these there were said to be six thousand, which originally had been purchased for a mere song.<sup>41</sup>

The visit of Gorostiza to New York about the first of March led the *Courier and Enquirer* to conjecture that negotiations had been set on foot between Mexico and the United States touching a proper boundary line between the two countries. Instead of adopting an imaginary boundary line in the vicinity of the Nueces, the Mexican minister had been instructed to say, "Give us a fair price in money for that portion of Texas between the line of your claim and the desert south of the Rio Grande, and we are prepared to establish the boundary line where nature has so clearly fixed it."<sup>42</sup>

The news of the defeat of Santa Anna by Houston and his men was received with a good deal of scepticism by the New York editors; nor is this surprising, in view of the fact that the 'glorious news' came right upon the heels of despondent tidings from the scene of war, just at a time when the expectation was general that the next report would be that of the extinction of the Texan Republic.<sup>43</sup> The *Albany Argus* declared the execution of Santa Anna would be a just retribution for the tyrant's misdeeds.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, one of the New York papers protested against any rejoicing over the "foul butcheries of San Jacinto," an imputation which was resented by the *Philadelphia National Gazette*, one of the journals in the East uniformly hostile to Texas.<sup>45</sup> The *New York American* of June 9 expressed itself as follows: "We scarcely remember any other parallel to this shooting and sabring fugitives than General Jackson and his militia shooting the wretched Seminoles after the battle of the Horse-Shoe." Such a charge as this aroused the just indignation of the editor of the *Argus*, who replied in an editorial of over two columns in length defending the victors of San Jacinto, who, under the exasperation

for sale in New York City at this time by subscribers "on favorable terms."

<sup>41</sup>*Courier and Enquirer*, Jan. 17, 1837.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, March 2, 1836. With this may be compared the rumor that Gorostiza had been authorized to sell Texas to the United States. See Rather, *THE QUARTERLY*, XIII, 198.

<sup>43</sup>*Evening Post*, May 23, 1836.

<sup>44</sup>May 19, 1836.

<sup>45</sup>June 21, 1836.

of the moment and the excitement of the contest, cut down the soldiery of Santa Anna. The foul outrage of Fannin's massacre "was condemned, if condemned at all, in the cold and measured language of one who, we have charity to believe, would have sought its palliation, if he had dared to trespass thus far upon the prevalent sentiment of indignation which pervaded every bosom (save the *American* and such like it) in every part of the republic."<sup>46</sup> Throughout the summer and winter months following the battle of San Jacinto came contradictory reports as to the probability of the Mexicans prosecuting hostile operations, the unlikelihood of the Texans achieving their independence, followed by the news in the spring of the new year that the Texans were calmly preparing to renew the struggle.<sup>47</sup> The ability of the Texans to withstand any efforts on the part of Mexico to subdue the rebellious province had a direct bearing upon the question of the recognition of the new republic by the United States government.

The belief that the Mexican government had sanctioned the massacre of Fannin and his men was to the *Courier and Enquirer* abundant provocation for the acknowledgment of the independence of Texas by our government.<sup>48</sup> Six months later in commenting upon an article in the *Evening Post* which contended that it was premature to assert that the independence of Texas was fully achieved, considering the populations of this country and Mexico, the *Courier and Enquirer* asserted it was always the policy of the government of the United States to acknowledge every *de facto* government without enquiring into titles. The reception of Wharton was warranted by the whole preceding course of our government. There was reason to apprehend that Texas might throw herself into the arms of England. Mexico was entitled to no claim to either forbearance or delicacy on the part of our government or our citizens. The intention, however, of Texas to solicit admission into the Union placed our government in a situation of peculiar delicacy. Finally, the editor concluded, let the friends of Texas depend mainly on their courage and energy, go slowly, use no threats, and shun the overtures of England.<sup>49</sup> The

<sup>46</sup>*Albany Argus*, June 14, 1836. *Ibid.*, July 20, 1836.

<sup>47</sup>*Evening Post*, July 5, 18, 21, 1836; *Courier and Enquirer*, Dec. 2, 15, 19, 21, 1836, Feb. 7, 1837.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, June 6, 1836.

<sup>49</sup>Dec. 13, 1836.

same paper two weeks later contained an editorial dealing with the President's message of December 21,—declaring substantially that the first movement looking to the recognition of the independence of Texas should come from Congress. The President was justified in recommending a somewhat cautious policy; for England might interfere if there was prospect of immediate incorporation with the United States. It was practically certain that Texas could and would maintain her independence and system of government. The obstacles to a renewed invasion of Texas were practically insuperable. "Such a people may be exterminated, they can never be subdued." The naval force of the United States in the Gulf of Mexico should be augmented as a matter of prudence and policy."<sup>50</sup>

It is surprising to find such a staunch supporter of the Texan cause as the *Albany Argus* maintaining that circumstances did not yet warrant recognition by our government of the independence of Texas; the explanation no doubt is to be found in the fact that the message of the twenty-first counselled caution and delay, and the *Argus* was too strict a party organ to countenance any other course. Governor McDuffie's message to the South Carolina legislature was printed by the *Argus* with the following comment: "South Carolina is the last state in the Union that would knowingly violate this sacred canon of political morality."<sup>51</sup>

The *Evening Post* thought the struggle in Texas was likely to continue, hence the *Post* was opposed to Congress acknowledging the independence of that country until it was certain independence had been established; then it would be our business honestly to acknowledge it. The Texans ought not to have lived under the arbitrary government of Mexico in the first place. On the other hand enmity to slavery should be no reason for refusing such acknowledgment. Moreover the acknowledgment of the independence of Texas by Congress was a gross usurpation of the functions of the Executive, who should take the initiative. The first thing to do was to secure satisfactory information as to the ability of the new government to sustain itself. When Texas had given proof of such ability, then the question of recognition might be

<sup>50</sup>Dec. 27, 1836. Cf. *Ibid.*, Dec. 3, 1836. For an account of the President's attitude in the matter of neutrality, see Barker, "The United States and Mexico, 1835-1837," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, I, 1-30.

<sup>51</sup>Dec. 28, 1836.

considered by the President. If Texas were not satisfied with this, let her apply to England. In a succeeding issue the *Post* was opposed to Texas being recognized until her acknowledgment by Mexico.<sup>52</sup>

It is interesting to note that while the 'leading prints' of the North and East felt that the government of the United States should go slowly in the matter of the recognition of Texas, these same journals were disposed to sanction the measures taken on the southwestern frontier for the preservation of peace in that quarter.

The *Evening Post* defended the instructions given to General Gaines by the Secretary of War; these instructions were as guarded as they could well be, and left no more to the discretion of the commander than was necessary for the successful conduct of military operations. The frontier being in danger and the Indian tribes along the border in a state of great excitement, our government was justified in a friendly occupation of the disputed territory between the two branches of the Sabine. The administration had been guilty of measures which might not be construed as a desire to preserve neutrality. In other words the *Post* was inclined to agree with Mason, of Virginia, that the position of the United States troops in the disputed territory was both a provisional and a precautionary measure. "Do opponents of such occupation of the territory in question," asked the *Post*, "wish to see the fires of savage warfare blaze along our whole line of western settlements?" The newspapers greatly exaggerated the danger from the Indians, but this is hardly a matter of surprise. The same paper defended General Gaines for "receiving advice" from General Rusk, and was disposed to uphold his movement to Nacogdoches, if, in his opinion, such a movement was necessary to restrain the Indian incursions.<sup>53</sup> In the opinion of the *Courier and Enquirer* the advance of the United States troops to Nacogdoches was a duty to the inhabitants of that region who, it might appear, were American citizens, and whom the government claiming jurisdiction over them with us could no longer protect in their persons and property.<sup>54</sup> The same paper, though belonging

<sup>52</sup>June 18, July 1, Dec. 13, 26, 29, 1836.

<sup>53</sup>May 4, 11, 12, 13, July 29, Aug. 2, 1836.

<sup>54</sup>Oct. 24, 1836. A similar view was expressed in the issue of August 10, 1836; in the issues of August 2, 20, 23, 1836, however, the editor



to the 'opposition' party, endorsed the President's letter to Governor Cannon, and commended General Jackson's cautious and judicious course in regard to the Texas question, though it was known he felt a strong sympathy for that country.<sup>55</sup> The New York *Express* admitted there were some good reasons for the course General Gaines had taken in view of the rumors concerning Mexican negotiations with the Indians.<sup>56</sup> The *Journal of Commerce* was of the opinion that the movement of General Gaines was not altogether premature, if the news of a Mexico-Indian alliance was correct.<sup>57</sup> The leading Whig organ, the *National Intelligencer*, in an editorial entitled "War in Disguise" deprecated the attitude of the United States towards Mexico, inasmuch as we had entered into a solemn treaty with that country. "The Rubicon is passed, a war has been entered upon without the shadow of justification, or so much as a provocation from the Mexican people" is the comment of the *Intelligencer* upon the advance of General Gaines.<sup>58</sup> In the opinion of the *Globe*, the administration organ, the editor of the *Intelligencer* was seeking to stigmatize the character of our country in the eyes of foreign nations. The Democratic journal undertook an elaborate defense of General Gaines' call for militia. It was evident to the *Albany Argus* that the alarmists of the opposition in the promptness with which they condemned General Gaines only gave evidence of their "ill concealed Mexican partialities."<sup>59</sup>

It has been the fashion for certain writers to criticize severely President Jackson for failure to enforce the neutrality laws of the United States during the Texas revolution. More and more it is coming to be recognized that the administration pursued a "cautious and judicious course" in this regard. The *Evening Post* thought if the Act of Congress of 1818 were not enforced, the President could not remonstrate with the treatment of Ameri-

argues against the premature occupation of the disputed region. According to the editor of the *Courier and Enquirer* Gorostiza's withdrawal was occasioned by the apprehension that remittances from his country would fail him.

<sup>55</sup>Aug. 26, 1836.

<sup>56</sup>Cited in the *Albany Argus*, Aug. 12, 1836.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, Aug. 13, 1836.

<sup>59</sup>Aug. 3, 12, 1836.

cans in Mexico.<sup>60</sup> The *Courier and Enquirer* held that it was the duty of the federal government to prohibit citizens taking part in the disturbances in Texas, especially since the motives of volunteers might not be disinterested.<sup>61</sup> A distinct service was rendered the Texan cause by the opinion of Judges Betts and Thompson of the southern district of New York. It was held that section 6 of the Act of April 20, 1818, applied only to military expeditions set on foot in the United States; hence donations of any kind, the shipment of arms, and even the enlisting of individuals was no infringement of the act. The following spring the *Post* contained an editorial dealing with the question of neutrality which was characterized by fairness and good sense. "The officers of the government have been enjoined to take all legal measures for preserving the neutral character of the nation in this contest, and we all know too well the character of our veteran and honest chief magistrate to fancy for a moment that he would encourage or allow any one to do that clandestinely which he would shrink from openly." As to the declaration of independence of Texas, "we enquire only what is the existing government and recognize that." The *Intelligencer* was rebuked for charging that officers of the government were conniving at and perpetrating an implied breach of the treaty by attempting to steal Texas. In conclusion, "it was the plain duty of the government not to deviate from the settled policy of the nation by meddling with the domestic quarrels of our neighbors. That duty has been and will continue to be scrupulously performed."<sup>62</sup> The *Albany Argus* was convinced every precaution had been taken by our government to preserve and protect our neutral relations.<sup>63</sup>

It only remains to notice the attitude of the New York papers touching the question of the annexation of Texas to the United States so far as this matter is referred to during the revolutionary period. In an editorial of January 17, 1836, the *Post* protested against prematurely raising the question of the admission of Texas. To interfere with such a purpose in view would be a shameful departure from our hitherto proclaimed principles, hav-

<sup>60</sup>Nov. 13, 1835.

<sup>61</sup>Oct. 28, 1835.

<sup>62</sup>May 2, 1836.

<sup>63</sup>May 18, 1836. Upon this topic see Smith, *The Annexation of Texas*, 22-28.

ing bound ourselves by a treaty to leave inviolate the domain of Texas. At all events the United States should refrain from taking any action until the independence of Texas was established. Six months later editorials similar in tone followed. The point of view of the *Post* was colored by the belief on its part that a set of speculators were polluting a cause otherwise noble. This attitude the *Post* maintained throughout the year. In December it expressed itself as opposed under any circumstances to the admission of Texas. It seemed to the editor that the owners of Texas lands were those most eager for the "admission of Texas into the republic."<sup>64</sup> The *Courier and Enquirer*, on the other hand, in replying to the articles of its contemporary, argued that Texas was a state possessing an independent government,—of this fact proof had been given. Not a hostile foot was upon her soil, the only indications of an invasion were threats and bravadoes. In an able and impartial manner the editor then proceeded to discuss the various questions connected with the admission of Texas into the Union. Setting aside the Abolitionists there would be no opposition, it was asserted, to the admission of Texas. In the great conflict of sectional interests, New England feared it would be in the minority. The Middle States were little concerned with the struggles of sectional feeling. The West would view without jealousy the acquisition of Texas. The old Southern States would thereby gain more than they would lose.<sup>65</sup>

It is thus seen that the citizens of New York responded generously to the appeals made to them by the Texan commissioners. Contributions were raised for the purpose of sending volunteers to Texas, the citizens of New York City petitioned Congress to recognize the independence of the new republic, while among the press of the northern states were some of the warmest defenders of the Texan cause.

<sup>64</sup>June 17, 18, July 1, Dec. 13, 29, 1836.

<sup>65</sup>Dec. 29, 1836. See also *Ibid.*, Dec. 31, 1836.